

I urge Congress to take immediate action to pass the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 235/S, 484), which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision. Both the House and the Senate held hearings in the 110th Congress, but the bill has not moved out of committee. I urge Congress to move the Social Security Fairness Act forward for a vote. In addition, if Congress takes up overall social security reform, I urge inclusion of repeal of the GPO and WEP as part of any reform package.

I entered teaching prior to the 1982 law eliminating Social Security benefits for teachers. I have continued to pay into Social Security by summer employment as well as military service. I have earned well above the required quarters to receive benefits. But the current law forces me to receive the minimum benefit. This is totally unfair! I have bills including insurance payments that have increased over my retirement years with very little increase in my state pension. I have again begun to live paycheck to paycheck like I did when I was first employed. I am sure I am not the only public employee who has had to have summer employment, a second job or military service to help with bills that a public service employment cannot cover. We know that public service jobs are some of the lowest paid positions and the first cut due to budget problems. We pay into social security like everyone else who receives benefits but receive little if any of the benefits due to our public service positions. These unfair offsets take away some retired public employees' benefits that they have earned, often forcing them into poverty. Public employees like educators, police officers, and firefighters should not suffer a penalty for dedicating their lives to public services. Retired public employees, as well as those still in the public servant position and those seeking to enter the profession cannot wait any longer for action.

I urge Congress to move the Social Security Fairness Act forward for a vote. In addition, if Congress takes up overall social security reform, I urge inclusion of repeal of the GPO and WEP as part of any reform package.

Sincerely,
Sandra L. Magill
MA